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SLAVERY AND INFIDELITY:

OR,

Slavery in the Church

ENSURES

INFIDELITY IN THE WORLD.

By REV. WILLIAM W. PATTON.

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P R E F A C E.

READER! do you receive the Bible as a divine revelation? Do you prize it for its peculiar doctrines, for its hallowed precepts, for its sanctifying influence? Is the religion of Jesus Christ, with its glorious scheme of human redemption, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and fully developed in the New, dear to your heart? Do you love it for the salvation which it has wrought in your own soul, and for its power to regenerate the fallen every where? Would you sooner sever your right hand from your body than knowingly raise it against the cause of the Redeemer, or in anywise abet the efforts of his enemies? Then, with a candid and prayerful mind, read that which is submitted to your consideration in the following pages. I propose to reveal a conspiracy against the blessed volume around which cluster all our hopes for time and eternity—to show how professed friends are undermining its influence, and preparing the way for its universal rejection. This tract will inform you of deadly assaults upon the Bible, which, instead of being repelled by those who claim to be the guardians of its reputation, are actually invited and encouraged, the defenders of revelation, occupying themselves with supplying weapons to the assailants! You will learn of new

and unsuspected forms assumed by skepticism, and of traitorous "aid and comfort" furnished by the Benedict Arnolds of the Church to the hearts of unbelievers.

You have heard much of late years concerning slavery, and, God helping the friends of the oppressed, you shall hear yet more in the years to come, till that accursed system shall be utterly overthrown. Perhaps you are an anti-slavery man and do not shrink even from the hated name of abolitionist, having been for years an ardent laborer in the cause of human liberty: if so, the facts and arguments which will now be adduced, will animate your zeal, increase your courage, strengthen your determination, multiply your efforts, and add fervor to your prayers. Perhaps you have hitherto been prejudiced against the anti-slavery movement, and in the exercise of conservative caution and fear, have refused to identify yourself with the struggling reformers, thinking their passions too heated, and their zeal excessive: be it so; read what I have to say and then judge whether it be not the duty of some one to sound an alarm through the land, for the honor of religion and in defense of the Bible. My object in this treatise is, to show that **SLAVERY** in the **CHURCH** ensures **INFIDELITY** in the **WORLD**.

Hartford, Ct. June, 18, 1856.

SLAVERY AND INFIDELITY.

THE BIBLE is the word of God. This is the truth which runs a dividing line between infidels and Christians. The infidel asserts its merely human origin, and consequently its imperfect, fallible, and even depraved character. The ignorant are declared to receive it through the credulity and superstition of their minds, while the intelligent are supposed to favor its claims, either as a result of education, or for merely selfish reasons. The Christian, on the other hand, contends that it was "given by inspiration of God," as an unerring guide to doctrine and duty, and was written by "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The evidence of its inspiration is two fold, external and internal. The external regards the peculiar and supernatural events attending its communication to mankind, and plainly heralding a revelation from God; such as prophecies and miracles

uttered and wrought by those who professed to bear a divine message. The internal evidence is connected with the character of the revelation itself, by which it appeals to the moral sense of men, and proves to be worthy of its divine author, by the importance of its topics, the ability with which they are treated, and the harmony and purity of its doctrines.

The assaults of infidels have been directed against both of the defenses named, though more especially against the former. There has been, indeed, an occasional and feeble attack upon the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, as when Paine argued that it represented God as exceedingly unjust and tyrannical; and when Hume, in opposition to Paul, attempted to show that "humility ought to be struck off from the catalogue of virtues and placed on the catalogue of vices;" but infidel argument and wit, have been principally expended in attempts to meet the evidence drawn from miracle and prophesy, or by denying the reality and possibility of supernatural events.

But within a few years a new system of tactics has been devised, and Christianity is now attacked on the side of its internal evi-

dence, as though that point, long thought by friends to be impregnable, and almost allowed by its enemies to be so, was now discovered to be the least capable of defense. Infidels have directed their efforts into a new channel, and borrowing the ethics of Christianity without acknowledgment, have given their theories a practical turn, attempting to convert infidelity from a mere negation to something positive. The noted Owen, in an infidel convention, in New York city, urged this point as one of vital moment, insisting that skeptics must advance beyond a mere denial of Christianity, and make positive affirmations involving truths concerning God and man, which would appeal to universal conscience. Hence the words, love, benevolence, virtue, fraternity, equality, liberty, and industry are continually upon their lips, and not a few of their number have embarked in schemes of at least nominal philanthropy, by which they propose to guard human rights, protect and aid human industry, and advance human happiness. In connection with this change of policy, they have begun to assail the church with the weapon of moral reformation. It may sound strangely in the

ears of some, to hear the battle cry of "reform" shouted by the infidel ranks, and it may contrast curiously with the lives of their standard writers in former days; nevertheless such is now their watchword. Yes, infidels profess to labor for a reformation in morals and for the regeneration of society, and boldly contend that Christianity, as represented by the Bible and embodied in the church, is the chief obstacle in the way of success. They denounce the Scriptures as a fountain of corruption, and the church as the strongest bulwark of wrong.

Among the subjects which have afforded infidels the occasion of an attack upon the religion of Christ, is slavery. By reason of the false position assumed by a large part of the Church, a specious pretext has been afforded to the enemy for coming, as it were, to the relief of the downtrodden, and for offering battle to Christians in behalf of the slave. Thus anti-slavery principles, originally derived from the Bible, but used by skeptics as though they were the affirmations of reason in contradiction of Scripture, have furnished an armory from which they have drawn some of their deadliest weapons, and by whose aid they have done

fearful execution among the prejudiced and ill-informed—God preferring to allow his cause to sustain a temporary defeat rather than give it the victory in league with oppression. Said a prominent infidel, well known at the West, in a convention of free thinkers in New York, “I have done with the old arguments against Christianity, and have adopted a more efficient plan. I work now through the moral reforms of the day and find that I can accomplish more than by any other means.” Those who have had an opportunity of watching his movements know, that his hardest blows are dealt in connection with slavery.

At first sight it may appear preposterous to denounce the Bible as sanctioning slaveholding, and the reader may be ready to propound such questions as these: Is not the whole tendency of the Bible in favor of liberty? Has it not wrought out nearly all the freedom, political, religious, or personal, which exists in the world? Is there in fact, true liberty any where outside of Christendom, or where the Bible is not circulated and believed? Do not all despots dread it, from the autocrats of the old world to the plantation tyrants of the new?

Did not the Grand Duke of Tuscany imprison the Madiari for possessing and reading this sacred volume, and did not the authorities of New Orleans arraign a Bible agent before the court for offering THE BOOK to a slave? Do not oppressors thus admit that the Bible is against them? Do not its pages contain such sentiments as these? "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, shall surely be put to death." "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages and giveth him not for his work." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal," or as the original reads, "Give unto your servants justice and equality." "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, for whore-mongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for *men-stealers*, for liars, for

perjured persons.” “Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” Surely more scathing denunciations of the sin in question can be found on record in no other book. How, then, can the infidel have the hardihood to affirm that the Bible sanctions American slavery?

The answer is not difficult. The infidel erects his superstructure upon the foundation which professedly Christian hands have laid. He takes his facts and interpretations as furnished by the church, plausibly assuming that it must be acquainted with the genius and teaching of Christianity. He surveys the church, and lo! thousands and tens of thousands of her accredited members actually hold slaves. Communicants “in good and regular standing,” reduce their fellow-men, and often their fellow-Christians to the condition of chattels, and by force keep them in a state of degradation and suffering, where parental authority is ignored, the marriage relation is legally unknown, the nearest kindred are torn

asunder and separated for life by sale, the body is often lacerated, the mind is doomed to brutal ignorance, and the soul not unfrequently left in perfect heathenism! Nor is this practiced merely by the common people, "who know not the law" of religion, but by the most intelligent classes, and by the very officers of the church. Bishops, ministers, elders, and deacons, are engaged in this awful business. Nor is it confined to some notoriously heretical sect, but characterizes equally Roman Catholics and Protestants, and among the latter, Unitarians and Trinitarians, Baptists and Pedo-Baptists, Calvinists and Arminians, who, despite their other differences, agree in maintaining that slaveholding is consistent with the inculcations of Scripture. Nor yet again, is this a recent practice which has gained ground contrary to the old standards, for it has flourished in the church, in this country, for two hundred years, amid the proclamation of what is claimed to be "the Gospel," and under the administration of ecclesiastical discipline. Besides, those portions of the church whose members do not hold slaves, very frequently defend the charac-

ter of those who do, and extend to them the hand of entire fellowship; while the Christian merchants of the North, in many cases, do not scruple to take mortgages and levy executions on the bodies of their fellow-men at the South, the proceeds of whose sale they quietly pocket in payment of debt. Nor is this all! The infidel opens the commentaries on the Bible, and finds them leavened with the same pro-slavery doctrine, most confidently teaching that slavery is one of the few choice institutions that have survived all changes of dispensation, and that slaveholders may be most worthy members of the Christian, as they were of the Abrahamic and Mosaic churches, in proof of which, Paul was especially directed by inspiration to write the epistle to Philemon on the occasion of sending back his fugitive chattel, Onesimus! And then, lest these commentaries should be thought old-fashioned in their exegesis, Prof. Stuart, the very Corypheus of exegetical improvement, declares, not with reference to exceptional cases but as a *general truth*, that the Bible "recognizes that the relation may still exist, *salva fide et salva ecclesia*," (without injury to the Christian faith or church), and

that only "the *abuse* of it is the essential and fundamental wrong." That this may not be supposed to be an "Andover heresy," or a part of "New England theology," Princeton boldly asserts (in an article published in the Princeton Review, in 1836, republished in an enlarged form, in the same periodical in 1844, and issued a third time in the Princeton Theological Essays) "that slaveholding is not necessarily sinful," and that "it is too clear to admit of either denial or doubt, that the Scriptures do sanction slaveholding." Then, to crown the whole, the missionary boards of several denominations tolerate slaveholding in the mission churches among the heathen, on the ground that such is the only Scriptural policy, and the missionaries of one society hesitated not to say in writing so recently as as the year 1848: "In relation to the separation of parents and children [by sale], we must first remark, that it is one of those things which are not forbidden by any express injunction of Scripture." "It is impossible in our circumstances to make it a general rule, that the separation of parents and children by sale or purchase shall be regarded as a dis-

ciplinable offence." And here it is proper to observe, to prevent misunderstanding, that the term slaveholding is not used in this discussion to denote the mere barren existence of the legal relation between the slave and his master, which it is sometimes out of the power of the master to terminate, even when he desires so to do, and which may in such cases exist side by side with the theoretic regard and practical treatment of the slave as a freeman and by his consent; but reference is had to the voluntary retention and actual use of that relation, or the *bona fide* claiming and holding a human being as a chattel, or piece of property. Against exoneration of an individual from guilt, who is constituted by the law of a slave State the owner of slaves whom it gives him no legal power to emancipate, and whom, in such circumstances, he treats as freemen in regard to all their personal rights, using at the same time his utmost influence to secure a change in the law, we have nothing to say. But such cases are exceedingly rare, and do not define the ordinary meaning of the term slaveholding, as applied to the system of bondage at the South, and the practice of

professed Christians under it. The arguments of pro-slavery divines and commentators, to which reference has been made, were intended to defend the *theory* and *practice* of slaveholding as generally understood and used among professors of religion in the Southern States.

Is it astonishing, in view of these facts, that the infidel claims that the Bible sanctions slaveholding? He tells you that he does not rely on his own opinion in this respect, which might be suspected of an unfavorable bias, but that he takes the case as stated by the advocates and defenders of Christianity, its ministers, writers, theological professors, commentators, and by the practice and discipline of the Christian church of all denominations. Starting, then, from this premise, he carries the argument on to the fatal conclusion that the Bible is not the word of God, that Christianity is not a divine system. It is by this process that the faith of thousands is undermined. Nor can this result be averted, but by rallying the followers of Jesus around the opposite and true position, that Christianity has no fellowship with slavery. The logic of

the case is simple and therein lies the danger; for the appeal to the natural conscience against a religion which sustains oppression, is direct and must meet with a response. With such concessions as are made by pro-slavery divines, it is impossible to reason from the moral purity of the Bible to its inspiration. Says the "New Englander," in review of Gov. Hammond's letter in defense of slavery:

"We will only say to those who think that the Bible sanctions slavery—Meet the infidel on the question of the *internal evidence* of the divinity and truth of the Bible, *if you can.*"

In support of the position, that slavery in the church ensures infidelity in the world, let us look first into the *logic* and secondly into the *facts* of the case.

It is implied in previous remarks, that the doctrine that the Bible sanctions slavery invalidates the internal evidence in its favor: four respects may be specified in which that evidence would be materially weakened if not destroyed.

1. In respect to the character of God. No book can be inspired which misrepresents the divine character. We have an intuitive con-

viction of the infinite excellence of God. The natural conscience affirms it, and the affirmation is corroborated by the slower deductions of reason from the works of creation. To these sources of knowledge the Bible itself refers as sufficient to instruct even the heathen on this fundamental point. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it to them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom, i, 19, 20.) Thus we are taught and necessarily believe, that God is perfectly and immutably wise, benevolent, holy, true and just, and if the Bible is to be received as inspired, it must teach the same truths with equal and even superior clearness. If it is found to represent directly, or by implication, that God is malevolent, deceitful, unholy, and unjust, no other ground for rejecting its claims is needed, since we know that God will never belie himself, nor publish and endorse a libel on his own character.

It has been contended by Christians, that the Bible meets this test in the most satisfactory

manner; that it not only does not contradict the affirmations of natural conscience and the teachings of reason, but more fully asserts and explains them, setting forth the divine character in a manner so clear, so pure, so glorious, as to challenge the admiration of the noblest intellects and most virtuous hearts; that in fact, it so far surpasses in this respect, every other work, as to stamp the seal of divinity upon every page. This I believe to be true; but my faith would be staggered, if I were to be convinced that the Bible sanctions the claim of property in man, that it proclaims slaveholding to be intrinsically right, or contains a defense of the oppression practiced upon the African race in the Southern States of this Union. For what is slaveholding, but the most flagrant contradiction of benevolence, holiness, justice, compassion, and every other virtue characteristic of God? If it be just for one man to appropriate wholly to himself the body, mind, time, and earnings of a fellowman from infancy to old age, I defy the lexicographers to define injustice. All that we commonly characterize as injustice is the *partial* doing of some *one* of these things; and shall he who does them all

be called just? The common sense of every man rejects the thought, and in view of the wide-sweeping usurpation of slaveholding, rather affirms the expression of John Wesley, "that it is the sum of all villanies." The human conscience stamps reprobation upon such legislation as that of South Carolina, which declares that "Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law to be *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever." Well did Judge Stroud remark, "Absolute despotism needs not a more comprehensive grant of power than that which is here conferred." And the law of Louisiana is similar." "Slaves shall always be reputed and considered *real estate*, shall be as such subject to be mortgaged according to the rules prescribed by law, and they shall be seized and sold as real estate." But if such legislation, which is merely the deliberate statement of the fundamental principles of slavery, be iniquitous in the highest degree, as a denial of the first principles of right, and as laying a legal basis for all conceivable outrage, what

must be the character of him who as Moral Governor approves and sanctions it? Does not the law reveal the moral position of the lawgiver, and is it not always a transcript of his character? If then the divine law, as professedly revealed in the Bible, is perfectly consistent with American slavery, and the essential nature of all slaveholding, then must the character of God, the lawgiver, suffer in the eyes of all who listen to the voice of reason.

But men know with intuitive certainty that God is just, and that slaveholding is unjust. The infidel dare not deny either fact. Thomas Jefferson, though a skeptic, appealed to the justice of God against this abomination. Speaking of slavery and the liability to an insurrection of slaves, he wrote, "*God is just* ; that his justice can not sleep forever ; that considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situations [between master and slave] is among possible events ; and that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no

attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest." Again he observes: "When the measure of their years shall be full, when their tears shall have involved heaven itself in darkness, *doubtless a God of justice will awaken to their distress*, and by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or, at length by his exterminating thunder, manifest his attention to things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of blind fatality."

These are the words of an infidel, whose conscience told him that slaveholding can never be reconciled with justice, and consequently that God can never sanction it. Now let it be supposed that a pro-slavery minister had approached him with a Biblical argument in defense of human chattelism! What would have been his answer? Something like this: "Sir, if your interpretation of the Bible be correct, it can not be the word of God; for God never inspired blasphemy; never authorized man to misrepresent and malign his own character, by constituting him the patron of oppression.

2. A similar argument may be framed in connection with the system of morals taught

in the Scriptures. A revelation from God must not only rightly represent the character of God, but also properly indicate the duties of man. Conscience and the natural reason affirm human brotherhood, and the corresponding duty of universal love. What says the Bible? Does it contradict or confirm? Christians have been accustomed to urge the pure and perfect system of morals inculcated in the Bible, as an undeniable proof of its divine origin. We point to the vain attempts of ancient philosophers to devise a moral code that should commend itself to every thoughtful and candid mind, as sufficient to regulate human conduct. We quote the maxims of justice and love which are contained in the New Testament, and contrast them with the selfishness and injustice inherent in all other ethical systems. We press the inquiry—How came it to pass, that the only perfect code of morals is contained in the Bible; that nowhere is universal and impartial love enjoined, save in its precepts; except it were, indeed, written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? This argument is unanswerable, so long as the main fact is conceded. Hence the infidel

Rousseau was compelled admiringly to exclaim, "Where could Jesus learn among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality of which he only hath given us both precept and example?" Even the scurrilous Paine, remarks of Christ, "He was a virtuous and amiable man. The morality that he preached and practiced was of the most benevolent kind."

But the force of this argument is lost on him who denies the fact asserted, and declares that the Christian religion teaches ethics which outrage every decision of our moral sense. And this is the position assumed by modern infidelity. Once skeptics endeavored to account for the pure morality of Scripture: now they deny its existence. When we cite the golden rule, they say, We care not for general assertions and abstract maxims; let us descend to particulars, and learn the specific acts and practices tolerated or forbidden by Christianity. Abstractly the greatest sinners condemn wickedness; it is in their concrete judgments that you discover their depraved character. Your leading divines assure us that slaveholding is perfectly consistent with

the morality of Scripture ; that the Bible recognizes two classes of men, OWNERS and OWNED, and sanctions the relation between them as voluntarily perpetuated by the former. They tell us that to hold the colored man as a chattel, to use him as a piece of animated property, as an intelligent machine, to take his earnings through life, to destroy his personal freedom, to hold him in a permanently degraded position, and to sentence his offspring to similar bondage forever, is in harmony with the instructions of Christ and the apostles ; in other words, the morality of the Bible allows of *robbing* in its *highest* form, by which a man is robbed of his own soul and body, of wife and children, of time and labor, of liberty and happiness, and is condemned to exist for another's convenience and gain !

Such is the tenor of modern infidel reasoning. They strengthen themselves by the notorious facts, that Southern oppression is defended from the Bible ; that those guilty of it are admitted to the church, and welcomed to almost universal fellowship ; that eminent commentators, theological professors, doctors of divinity, and missionary boards, declare

that slaveholding, as ordinarily practiced by professors of religion, is not inconsistent with evidence of regeneration, and a fair Christian character. If some Northern pro-slavery man interposes the plea, that only those slaveholders are received to fellowship who are nominally such, who sustain the legal relation not for personal gain, but for the good of the slaves that are providentially intrusted to their care, the infidel points in reply to ten thousand rebutting facts, and to the explicit statement of Rev. James Smylie, of the Amite Presbytery, Mississippi, who, pleading for slavery as justifiable, says in a printed pamphlet: "If slavery be a sin, and advertising and apprehending slaves, with a view to return them to their masters, is a direct violation of the divine law, and *if the buying, selling, or holding a slave*, FOR THE SAKE OF GAIN, is a heinous sin and scandal, then, verily, *three fourths of all the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, in eleven States of the Union are of the devil.*" This is the testimony of a slaveholder who rejects the apologies untruly made by his Northern friends. Let another witness speak. When the contro-

versy on slavery, which sundered the Methodist Episcopal Church was at its hight, in the discussion of the General Conference, and in the newspapers, Wm. A. Smith, D.D., of Virginia, was the leading defender of the slaveholders, while Dr. Bond, of New York apologized in their behalf, that they were forced to retain their slaves by the laws, and would gladly free them if they could. Upon this Dr. Smith indignantly rejected the apology, and said, that "Southern Methodists concurred in making the laws, voluntarily did so, as far as the system itself was concerned, and that in Virginia, particularly, they could not avail themselves of the benefit of his apology, because so strong is the non-slaveholding interest, that at any time when the membership of the church shall unite their votes with the non-slaveholders, in western Virginia, particularly, they are competent to overturn the whole system; but that we did not do so, because we considered it our solemn Christian duty to sanction and sustain the system under its present unavoidable circumstances."

These, then, being the facts, infidels argue that such a religion never came from God,

teaching as it does a doctrine subversive of human rights, hostile to republican principles, and at war with all true morality. Says the celebrated and learned English infidel, Francis Newman, when arguing in a recent work against the inspiration of the Bible, "The New Testament is the argumentative stronghold of those who are trying to keep up the accursed system of slavery." The truth is, the moral sense of men condemns slaveholding, so that even the slaveholder knows that it is wrong. Hence, John Randolph worded his will in this manner: "In the name of God, Amen. I, John Randolph, of Roanoke, in the county of Charlotte, do ordain this writing, written with my own hand, this fourth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all others, whatsoever. I give to my slaves their freedom, *to which my conscience tells me they are justly entitled.*" Hence he said in his scathing rebuke of Edward Everett in 1820: "Sir, I neither envy the head nor the heart of that man from the North, who rises here to defend slavery upon principle." Thomas Jefferson, both infidel and slaveholder,

writing, in 1785, to Dr. Price, of London, in relation to a pamphlet against slavery, which the latter had published, says: "From the mouth to the head of the Chesapeake, the bulk of the people will approve it in theory, and it will find a respectable minority ready to adopt it in practice—a minority which for weight of character preponderates against the greater number, who have not the courage to divest their families of a property, *which, however, keeps their consciences uneasy.*" Conscience utters but one voice on this subject, to those who honestly interrogate it. John Randolph felt this, when he called witnesses to his dying bed, that he might orally confirm what he said in his will, respecting the emancipation of his slaves, and as he lay writhing in mental agony, thinking of his injustice in having withheld their freedom, among his other sins, cried out Remorse! *Remorse!!* REMORSE!!! and insisted upon having the word written on one of his own cards, that he might look at it.

Depend upon it, reader, the religion which sanctions slaveholding must gain a victory over the conscience before it can be received as coming from God.

3. If the Bible sanction slaveholding, then, by implication, it teaches either a false or a contradictory doctrine with regard to the accountability of a large portion of the human race. There is no doctrine more clearly and forcibly proclaimed by the natural reason than that of universal human accountability. Conscience irresistibly affirms the fact of a divine government and of man's responsibility. It necessarily links certain duties to certain relations which men sustain to God and each other, and imposes or expresses obligation in connection with our position as the creature, subject, and beneficiary of God, and the child, parent, husband or wife; sister or brother, friend or neighbor of fellow man; so that, through some one of these relations, we become accountable for every act. A large part of the infidel world, including their most powerful writers, acknowledge this truth, and so fundamental is it to all conceptions of morals and religion, that we could not reasonably receive a book as inspired, which directly, by logical implications, denies it, or which teaches a confused or contradictory doctrine respecting it.

But did the reader ever reflect upon the

ultimate basis of personal accountability? It rests upon the essential elements of manhood, upon those prerogatives and rights which properly belong to every human being, and by which he is infinitely separated from brutes and mere *things*. The chief of these is liberty, or the power to control his own acts, to form and execute his own decisions, to use his own being. Obligation depends on ability to both will and do. Now a slave is, as such, a mere *chattel*. The chief distinction between him and a brute has been practically annihilated. He has lost his *manhood* and become *property*. He has fallen from the sublime height of *personality* and sunk into a thing. He stands forth a being despoiled of rights, owned and possessed by another, classed in Louisiana and Kentucky with real estate, and in South Carolina with personal effects, inventoried, invoiced, advertised, bought and sold at private and public sale, with horses, oxen, houses, lands, and farming implements and stock, and in every way legally brutalized. He has no such rights as inhere in a rational and accountable being, and must therefore logically be excluded from the pale of responsibility. Rights are the cap-

ital which we all possess ; destroy that capital and how can the income be reasonably demanded ? The leading newspaper of Virginia, has recently conceded that slavery is utterly irreconcilable with the idea that the negro is a man, and therefore boldly contends that he is not such ! This was the idea which led the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to say, in their unanimous action of 1818, "Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system—it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction ; whether they shall know and worship the true God ; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the Gospel ; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors and friends ; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity."

Moreover, a Southern ecclesiastical body has solemnly decided that slaves are not free agents, a logical consistency not often exhib-

ited. The question having been referred, in 1835, to the Savannah River Baptist Association, Whether slaves, who are husband and wife and are sold apart, so as to have no prospect of future intercourse, ought to be allowed to enter into new marriages? they answered in the affirmative, because otherwise the parties would be exposed "not only to stronger hardships and strong temptations, but to *church censure* for acting in obedience to their masters * * * * *. *The slaves are not free agents*, and a dissolution by death is not more entirely without their consent, and beyond their control, than by such a separation." Thus the dictionary must be altered so that instead of reading "Marriage is the legal union of a man and woman for life," it shall add, "except in the case of slaves, with whom it is a relation not recognized in law, and terminating at the will of the owner."

According to the legal and true conception of the slave as a piece of property, he has no right to wages; nor to a wedded wife whom to love and with whom to live till separated by death; nor to a family of his own whom he shall feed, clothe, instruct, and train as he

judges best; nor to fixed hours of labor and rest; nor to the Sabbath; nor to the means of learning, no, not even so as to read the Bible; nor to opportunities of religious worship at his own discretion; nor to decide the place of his habitation, the nature of his employment, the Church which he will attend, or the time he shall spend in doing good. You might as well assert similar rights of the horse or ox. Though he be nominally a husband, a father, a son, or a brother, he must not perform the duties which these relations imply, except at the discretion of another! Grant these prerogatives, and slavery falls at once. Take them away, and you have no longer a man but a thing; and I know of no being save man that is or can be accountable in this world.

If, now, you assert that the Bible sanctions slavery, the infidel will argue that it thereby overthrows the responsibility of a part of the race, at the very moment that it teaches that all are accountable, and must ultimately stand at the bar of God to be judged for the deeds done in the body. It insists that all must discharge the duties involved in marriage, parentage,

fraternity, and fidelity; while yet it places a portion of the husbands, wives, parents, brothers, sisters, and children, where these relations are merely nominal, and the rights and duties consequent upon them are impossible. It commands and disables at the same time. It lays injunctions upon the slave, so far as he is included in general precepts, as though he were possessed of the responsibility, and consequently of the rights of a man, and then in its specific reference to him, assigns him the place of a brute with its implied irresponsibility. God would better have made the slaves brutes in all respects, than to have thus mocked them with the shape, and tortured them with the feelings and responsibilities, of manhood. If, then, the Bible means to deny the accountability of this part of the human race, systematically and upon principle, it is repugnant to all the affirmations of natural conscience. If, on the other hand, it teaches universal rights and responsibility, and yet endorses slavery, which is the destruction of both, it most outrageously contradicts itself, and thus disproves its own inspiration.

4. To teach that the Bible sanctions slave-

holding, is to destroy the evidence in its favor that is derived from its practical influence. Experiment is the test of theory, and accordingly experimental religion has been the chief reliance of those who have advocated the claims of the Bible to inspiration. Christ himself admitted the fairness of this test, when he said, "By their fruits shall ye know them." Christians have accordingly pointed the infidel to the practical influence of the Bible and Christianity throughout the world, in elevating individuals, classes, communities, and races. They claim that the Bible has always operated to enlighten, purify and bless; that the most civilized and happy nations are those within the bounds of Christendom; that it has ever proved to be the special friend of the afflicted, unfortunate, and oppressed; and that all that is necessary to change earth into paradise is, to have the doctrines of the Bible universally carried out. So I believe. But with slaveholders, and their apologists to interpret the Bible, and to preach and apply the Gospel, the argument is materially weakened, *unless* we reject these perverters of truth as fundamental errorists, guilty of representing their

heresy as the doctrine of Scripture, and their immorality as the fruit of Christianity. Let us suppose the infidel, whose soul revolts against the injustice of slavery, to have listened to an argument at the South in favor of the Bible, drawn from its actual influence in elevating man. He concludes to apply the test, and turns to ascertain what has been the practical effect of preaching the Gospel upon the system of slavery. He finds at the outset the system firmly intrenched, and exhibiting every sign of vitality and power. It shows itself everywhere, among all classes of society, and seems to be regarded with general favor. He then inquires into its history, to learn whether it has not diminished in the course of time, so as to be a decaying relic of a once powerful institution, lingering yet among all classes, but existing rather in name than reality, and expected soon to pass away forever. But he ascertains that it has steadily grown from the beginning, so that the slaves have multiplied from a few thousands to over three millions, while the system has taken possession of State after State, seizing upon the fairest portion of the American Union.

He finds, also, that it is cherished with peculiar strength of feeling and tenacity of purpose, so that the people make it the test question in politics, paramount to all others, the only one in fact in which both parties are agreed; and that leading statesmen have declared it to be "the corner-stone of our republican edifice." Next, he explores the South, to ascertain whether the Bible has ever been circulated there, whether Churches exist, whether ministers of the Gospel are to be found. Perhaps this system of oppression has grown up in the absence of the Scriptures, and of the various institutions of Christianity. But this explanation will not answer, for he finds the Bible in the houses of the whites (it is suspiciously absent from the huts of the slaves), and even learns that Bible Societies exist in every State, and nearly in every county, to promote the circulation of the Scriptures. Then he perceives numerous and costly church edifices on every hand, which on the Sabbath are frequented (in the forenoon) by large audiences. There are clergymen, also, of every denomination, orthodox and heterodox, with theological seminaries, missionary socie-

ties, and other appropriate instrumentalities for Church extension. Thereupon he concludes that the slaveholders are not numbered among the Church members, but constitute the world, especially, as he hears the ministers denounce Romanism, Pelagianism, Unitarianism, Sabellianism, Manicheanism, Fourierism, and other errors with great boldness, while they can scarcely find words sufficiently strong with which to condemn murder, forgery, horse-stealing, card-playing, theaters, and dancing. But alas! he is soon dispossessed of that idea, as he listens to learned discourses in favor of the godly and patriarchal practice of slaveholding, and most acute discriminations between the wickedness of stealing lambs, and the rightfulness of appropriating other people's children. He discovers that nearly all the Church members, who have the pecuniary ability, own slaves, including a goodly proportion of the ministers; that the preaching of the Gospel for two hundred years, has resulted in giving a Scriptural sanction to the institution, and elevating oppression into a Christian virtue; that the Bible is universally acknowledged to be the word of God, and the

perfect rule of life, and is yet relied on to prove the propriety of a system which reduces three millions of the inhabitants to the condition of chattels, in which, abjectly ignorant and in every way degraded, they groan out a weary life, in unremitting and unpaid toil; a system which blights and destroys every thing with which it comes in contact, bringing a curse upon agriculture, commerce, education, literature, society, morals, and religion. He perceives that the chattel principle, or the doctrine that one man may be the property of another, is advocated on Scriptural grounds by the governor in his message, the legislator in the halls of legislation, the professor from his chair, the judge from the bench, the editor from the columns of his paper, and the clergyman from the pulpit. Governor Hammond, of South Carolina, writes a series of letters to the philanthropist, Thomas Clarkson, in which he says "American slavery is not only not a sin, but especially commanded by God through Moses, and approved by Christ through his apostles." Thus the sanction of the Bible is claimed not for some rare, exceptional case of slaveholding, but for the system as defined and

established by law. Thus the Georgia Annual (Methodist) Conference resolved, "that slavery as it exists in these United States, is not a moral evil." The Charleston Baptist Association, said in 1835, in a memorial to the legislature, "This Association does not consider that the Holy Scriptures have made the fact of slavery a question of morals at all." Bishop Soule of the Methodist Church (South), declared at Pittsburg in 1849, "I have never yet advised the liberation of a slave, and think I never shall." Such seems to be the unanimous sentiment of the Southern Church, and such the practice which has been fostered by it in the name of religion. Then as the infidel turns to the Northern Churches, he finds, indeed, that while owing to a different social state, and various hindrances of soil and climate, slavery has been abolished, so that only occasional slaveholders are found in the Churches, men who have property or securities at the South, yet there is a firm alliance between the Northern and Southern Church. Slaveholders are fellowshipped through the non-slaveholding States, and not a few of the ministers, theological professors, and other ex-

pounders of Scripture harmonize with Southern interpreters. The national benevolent societies, supported almost wholly by Northern Christians, throw their influence on the side of the oppressor. Thus some of them sustain missions, home and foreign, in which slaveholders are freely admitted to the Church. The American Bible Society, while loudly condemning the Romish Church, for withholding the Bible from its members, has never been known, either in its annual reports or by its resolutions on anniversary occasions, to denounce the systematic exclusion of the Bible, by law and custom, from the slave population of our own land; and the American Tract Society, and the American Sunday School Union, though publishing against almost all other sins and immoralities, great and small, have persisted in excepting slavery, a silence that speaks more loudly for oppression, in the circumstances and relations of the case, than the published defence of others.

What, now, must be the conclusion of the infidel as to the practical influence of the Gospel in favor of human elevation? Will

he not start back from the claims of such a religion, with something of the same spirit which provoked the contempt of a worldly man, a veteran "democratic" politician, who, on listening to the pro-slavery speeches of grave divines in the Presbyterian General Assembly, a few years since, exclaimed to a friend at his side, "I can't stand that. We politicians sometimes apologize for slavery, and wink at it for political reasons; but these *holy* (!) men go in for it *on godly grounds!*" Not long since the writer listened to an eloquent address of a German, who had fled an exile to our shores, for his efforts to promote civil liberty in the old world. Said he, "you wonder why many of us are infidels. It is because in our own land the clergy, almost to a man, have sided with the despotisms under which we have groaned, and have quoted the Bible, *ad nauseam*, to prove that it was our duty to submit unresistingly to those whom God had appointed to rule over us. And then, when we come to this boasted land of freedom, we find the same thing essentially repeated; for we see, as before, the Church and especially the ministry, arrayed against the slave, and

the Bible again quoted to sustain the oppressor. How can we believe that such a religion, and such a book, were given by God?"

I have thus considered the *logic* of the case, and instanced four respects in which the internal evidence in favor of Christianity is essentially weakened if not utterly destroyed, by claiming its sanction for American slavery, or even for the principle of slaveholding in any case.

Now let us turn to investigate the *actual facts*, that we may discover whether they corroborate our theory. I shall cite instances in point connected with four different classes, who sustain various relations to slavery, viz, the slaves, the free people of color, the slaveholders, and the opponents of slavery.

1. The connection of slaveholding with religion, causes skepticism among the slaves. We could hardly expect it to be otherwise. The slave, conscious that he has been stripped of all his rights, and accustomed to understand from the pro-slavery ministers that Bible doctrine may be condensed into the precept which is so favorite a text, "Servants obey your masters," must either believe that slaveholding Christians are hypocrites, or that Chris-

tianity is not from God. The wonder is, that the slaves are not all *Atheists*; for if philosophers, speculating in their studies on the evils of the world, have sometimes reasoned themselves into a doubt or disbelief of the divine existence, it is not surprising, if he who has fallen into humanity's lowest condition, and is condemned to drink its bitterest cup, should exclaim in despair with Cassy in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "There's no use calling on the Lord; he never hears. There isn't any God, I believe; or if there is, he has taken sides against us." Nor is this a mere piece of imagination drawn from a work of fiction, for Sir George Stephen in his review of Mrs. Stowe's work, gives a parallel case from actual life. As a lady was embarking from Mauritius for England, a poor slave woman caught her by the dress, and said in a humble but sadly earnest tone:

"Have you a God in your country, ma'am?"

"How can you ask such a question? God is there and here and everywhere."

"No ma'am; no God here, never been here, ma'am, in his life; no God here; but if God live with you, tell him what we poor slaves suffer."

The whole influence of the system as defended by the Church is, to cause a rejection of Christianity by the oppressed. The following fact was communicated by Mr. D. De Vinne to the "Free Wesleyan," having been related to him by Mr. G. Dougherty, a professor of religion and member of the Mississippi legislature.

"In the year 1806, on the arrival of a slaver from the coast of Africa, J. Dougherty went to the city of Savannah to buy slaves. After several hundred had been sold in lots and single, as suited the purchasers, a middle aged man was put upon the stand, who wished to make a communication before he was sold, the purport of which was, that he was a Mohammedan, and that whenever the hour of prayer and other devotional duties came, he must have time to attend to them. Mr. D. who had lately embraced religion and seemed to be zealous to promote the cause, gave the highest price for him, feeling confident within himself that he would soon convert him to the true faith. Taking him to his plantation, he built him a hut and assured him, that he should be allowed the time he required, and, in addition, should have every opportunity to attend the meetings

of the Christians. He for a while attended these meetings and learned something of Christianity, without discontinuing, however, his former devotions. At the expiration of about a year, his master, who was intent on his conversion, asked him finally, if he did not prefer Christianity to Mohammedanism, and if he would not openly renounce the prophet and acknowledge Jesus Christ? The slave asked, *if the Christian religion allowed one Christian to hold another in slavery, and their children after them?* The answer was, of course, in the affirmative. The Mohammedan replied, that the *religion of the prophet did not allow that!* The result was, that this slave, in a land of Bibles and Gospel ministers, daily said his prayers, performed ablutions, made his prostrations, and at an advanced age died, declaring that ‘God is one God and Mohammed is his prophet.’ Thus, in our own land, was the religion of Jesus put to shame before the claims of the false prophet, and the poor slave preferred to trust his soul to Mohammed rather than to Christ, the tender mercies of whose religion he had been led to believe were cruelty.

Next listen to the testimony of Rev. J. D.

Paxton, formerly a slaveholder. He remarks: "It is often said, and not without reason, that there is a growing indisposition among slaves to worship with their masters, and attend on the preaching of whites. Now that this prejudice of slaves against worshipping with the whites, may be traced mainly to the system of slavery, is to me most certain. The relation between master and slave, is not one of mutual agreement, in which there is a *quid pro quo*, a stipulated service for a stipulated reward; but one of force on the part of the master, and hard necessity on the part of the slave. Suppose the master to be a professor of religion and to pray in his family. After laboring during the day, the slave comes home and throws himself down to rest. He was called out, it may be, pretty early; he has labored under the eye of a watchful master or overseer; has been found fault with, as to his manner of doing his work, or his not doing it faster; has been scolded and threatened, and perhaps whipped; has made his meal, it may be, in the field, and on provisions much inferior to what he knows his master and family enjoy. His labors for the day are, however, closed;

presently he hears the horn blow or the bell ring for prayers. What, now, are the thoughts which would be most likely to pass through the mind of a slave of no decided religious feelings. 'Ah! the white folks are going to be religious now: master is going to pray! He takes his ease all day, and makes us poor negroes do his work. He is always finding fault, and scolding, and whipping us. I don't think his prayers will do much good. I won't go to prayers!' Their aversion to attend family prayers is so common, as to be the subject of frequent remark. I think, that nine times out of ten, few attend even in professors' houses, excepting the house servants, and not unfrequently they slip out of the house when the family assembles for prayer."

The Rev. S. R. Sneed, formerly a slaveholder in Kentucky, declared in a public meeting in Cincinnati, that he had, to his surprise, found an obstinate unwillingness in his slaves to receive religious instruction from their master, and that he had been compelled to resort to the lash, to induce them to attend family worship! But as soon as he gave his slaves their freedom the difficulty ceased.

And this calls to mind a fact related by Rev. Mr. Gardner (colored), formerly of Philadelphia, as having occurred in Maryland, in his own presence. A service was held of more than usual interest in a Methodist church, and the galleries were filled with blacks, mostly slaves, that part of the house being stately assigned to them. When the lower part of the church became crowded, the Methodist preacher rose, and called out in an authoritative way, "You black folks! leave the galleries, give up your seats to the whites, and go into the woods, and a colored minister will preach to you." Not a man stirred. Thereupon he reiterated his command still more emphatically, when a tall, stately looking slave rose up in the gallery, called in a loud voice to the preacher, imprecated a bitter curse on him and his religion, and left the house!

But one of the most striking proofs of the skeptical feelings, which pro-slavery preaching produces among slaves, is candidly related by the well known Rev. C. C. Jones, in his Tenth Annual Report of the Association for the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in Liberty county, Georgia. He says, "I was preaching

to a large congregation (of negroes), on the Epistle to Philemon; and when I insisted upon fidelity and obedience as Christian virtues in servants, and upon the authority of Paul, condemned the practice of running away, one half of my audience deliberately rose up and walked off with themselves, and those that remained, looked any thing but satisfied either with the preacher or his doctrine. After dismissal, there was no small stir among them: some solemnly declared that there was no such epistle in the Bible; others, that it was not the Gospel; others, that I preached to please masters; and others, that they did not care if they never heard me again." The Gospel of liberty is written by the finger of God upon every human heart, and no oral preaching nor false glosses on the meaning of Scripture, can blot it from universal belief. There are some heresies, of which the divine origin of slaveholding is one, which even nature will expose and refute in the minds of the most degraded, and the slaves were better judges of the Gospel of Christ, through their moral instincts, than was Mr. Jones with all his learning. If he had convinced them that

his interpretation was correct, he would have converted his hearers, indeed, but it would have been to infidelity!

The Rev. Albert Barnes, in his work on slavery, illustrates this impossibility of overturning the decisions of natural conscience by appeals to the Bible, from his own experience. Many years ago, when he shared the prevalent errors on the subject of slavery, he met one day, near the gate of his church, a fugitive slave from Maryland, who solicited assistance. Mr. B. endeavored to convince him from the Bible, that he had done wrong to leave his master, and ought to return. But never was Gospel-hardened sinner more unimpressible, for, says Mr. B., "All my arguments had no force in his view, whatever." The probability is, that a few more such ministerial appeals would have made the man flee from the Church, ministry, Bible, and slavery together.

Said Lewis Clark, a fugitive from Kentucky, well known in many of the free States where he has lectured, in answer to the question, what do the slaves know about the Bible? "They generally believe that there is some-

where a real Bible, which came from God; but they frequently say that the Bible now used is 'master's Bible.'"

This opinion of the effect of slavery upon the religious views of the slaves, was entertained by the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D.D., that leading New England divine, who preached so boldly and effectually to his own slaveholding congregation. In his discourse upon the slave trade and slavery, in answer to the inquiry how the victims regard "those dealers in slaves, who are called Christians," he says: "Is it possible they should look upon them in a better light than we do the savages, not to say the inhabitants of the infernal regions! What then must they think of Christianity? Is this the way to persuade them to be Christians? What could be done more to prevent it? Many millions of these poor creatures have doubtless lived and died with the greatest aversion to Christianity, and even the name of a Christian, from the treatment they have received from those who have called themselves Christians."

2. Let us notice the bearing of this subject on the free colored people. That they must

sympathize with the feelings of the slaves is apparent, for many of them have been slaves, others have relations in slavery, all are of the enslaved race, and suffer under the burden of wrong which prejudice inflicts upon them, as a consequence of the general degradation of their people. Those who have labored among them, will testify that many of them exceedingly resent the oppressive treatment which they receive, and are especially indignant that professors of religion should manifest so little philanthropy. There are those who will not enter our churches to be thrust like leprous persons into some far off seat, there to sit where sight and hearing are difficult, a proscribed class set apart for insult in the very house of God. They have too much pride to submit to the indignity, and prefer rather to omit worship than to engage in it in a manner which thrusts their inferior position continually before them, and almost prompts them to hate man in the very attempt to love God.

The late Rev. Theodore S. Wright, formerly pastor of the First Colored Presbyterian church in New York city, speaking of the cruel and wicked prejudice which operates against the

colored people, remarked, "The colored man is excluded from the house of God. Even at the communion table he can only partake of the crumbs offered to him after the others have been served. This prejudice drives the colored man from religion. I have often heard my brethren say that they would have nothing to do with such a religion. They are driven away and go to infidelity; for even the infidels at Tammany Hall make no distinction on account of color."

Rev. Mr. Gardner, for many years pastor of a colored church in Philadelphia, informed me that one congregation of colored persons in that city was wholly broken up and dispersed in consequence of the oppressive treatment received from those who professed to be followers of Christ, and that many now attend no church, and have become sceptical in their opinions.

The Rev. Dr. Pennington who succeeded Mr. Wright in the N. Y. church, and was in early life himself a slave, has borne his testimony to the writer to the same effect, as have also other intelligent colored men, both laymen and ministers.

3. But let us not forget to inquire after the effect upon slaveholders. If they have consciences, the voice of reason and of God may be expected sometimes to prevail even over the clamors of self interest, so far as to make them inwardly loathe the corrupt religion which sanctions their deeds. A pirate may rob and murder upon system and as the business of life, because such conduct gratifies his selfish passions; but he will hardly consent to employ a chaplain on board his vessel to pray over the plunder, to prepare the victims for death, and to quote chapter and verse from the Bible, (as for instance I Sam. xxvii, 7-11. which might establish David as its pious teacher and exemplar,) to prove the propriety of piracy; though it is stated that some of the Spanish pirates, being devout Romanists, never forget to invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary and their patron saint! It would be surprising, therefore, if many slaveholders did not see through the sophistry of their clergymen, and thus be led to despise religion and the Bible. They have sufficient moral sense to loathe whatever savors of formalism, cant, or hypocrisy, and though they lust after the gain and

power of slaveholding, are disgusted with those who would change it into a virtue. It can not command their respect, to

“Torture the pages of the hallowed Bible,
To sanction crime, and robbery, and blood;
And in oppression’s hateful service, libel
Both man and God.”

A few years since, that tried friend of the slave, Lewis Tappan, was returning from England and introduced the subject of slavery as a topic of conversation among the passengers. In the debate which ensued, a professor of religion espoused the side of oppression and was specially fluent in quoting texts of Scripture to support his position. After the discussion ceased, a slaveholder from Cuba who was present, came to Mr. Tappan and said of the Scriptural advocate of slavery, “I have no confidence in that man’s religion. I would not trust him. He is not honest, and I will not speak another word to him the rest of the voyage.”

George Bourne, long a resident and minister at the South, in his picture of slavery, (p. 137) says of its effects upon slaveholders, “It is the prolific source of all infidelity and irreligion.
* * * * * A Christian observer in the

slave driving States, will incessantly behold the following developments of infidelity and irreligion, here disguised in a hypocritical garb of exterior decorum, and there avowed in all their criminal deformity and palpable turpitude." He declares that multitudes of slaveholders are characterized by a "scornful rejection of the Bible altogether." This fact may be accounted for in one of two ways, or by both; either they believe that the Bible condemns their oppression and therefore hate and disown it, or else they are persuaded by the clergy and the Church that it approves of slaveholding, and then their moral sense is affronted and they loathe so corrupt a religion. Mr. Bourne adverts to the case of a mild slaveholder, who was so disgusted with the words and deeds of ministers on this subject, that he denounced them all as hypocrites, and utterly abandoned public worship.

And here it may not be amiss to adduce the testimony of Cassius M. Clay, until recently a slaveholder, and who is not a professor of religion. In one of his addresses several years since, he said:

"But when and how shall we class that man who knocks from under our tottering and

weary feet, this last scaffolding of hope, and makes God himself the worst of tyrants, the falsest of friends, the most unjust of fancied existences. The man who attempts to justify slavery from the Bible is that man! If he win us to his opinions, he makes us infidels; we lose our belief in the existence of a God, our idea of the immortality of the soul, all distinction between right and wrong; we sink from the man into the beast; we would not scruple to murder our mother for a meal of vituals, or scatter the desecrated remains of a dead sister, or father, or wife, to manure our cucumber vines! We thank God that instinct is stronger than reasoning, and conscience more powerful than argument. We do most sincerely believe, (and we deliberately weigh what we say,) that all the books and papers which have been written to prove slavery a divine institution, have never convinced a single man or woman that it was *right*—no, not one!”

4. One other class remain, those who condemn and oppose slaveholding. These abound wherever the Bible is truly interpreted as antagonistic to slavery, and constitute the mass of every Christian community, but there

are, also, those who hate oppression, and yet reject the Bible. These seize upon the pro-slavery explanations so mournfully current, and use them to vindicate their skepticism. Precisely as the union of the Church with a tyrannical State in most of the countries of Europe, has created thousands and tens of thousands of infidels in the Old World, so the pro-slavery attitude of the Church in this land, is working out the same result, both there and here. Already the infidel reviews and books of England and the continent, point to the Bible as the stronghold of oppression, and especially of slavery, and the emigrants from those countries come over impregnated with this error.

Even the heathen are feeling the influence of this sin, and are using the toleration of slavery in Christian America, as an argument against Christianity. A few years since, a missionary among the Karens of farther India, wrote home that his course was much embarrassed by a suspicion there generated, that the Americans intended to steal and sell them. He says, "I dread the time when these Karens will be able to read our books, and get a full

knowledge of all that is going on in our country. Many of them are very inquisitive now, and often ask me questions that I find it very difficult to answer." Nor is he the only missionary whose heart is made sad, and whose hands are weakened by the existence of legalized and baptized oppression in this country. A fellow laborer among the Nestorians of Persia, writes (see New York Independent, January 12, 1854), "We dare not tell these Nestorians that such an institution exists in free, happy America."

Through the South are scattered many who condemn slaveholding, and whose moral sense, nauseated by the wretched doctrines palmed off as "the Gospel," has driven them to the rejection of the Bible. Lewis W. Paine, who suffered imprisonment under the barbarous laws of Georgia nearly six years for aiding in the escape of a slave, told the writer that one of the most shrewd and intelligent man, whom he met at the South, was an infidel who detested slavery, and denounced the Bible for sanctioning it. A correspondent of the Emancipator, writing from the South, May 1846, says, "I fell into conversation with an infidel,

a native of North Carolina, and a resident of Alabama. The *first* argument he brought against the Scriptures was, the assertion that they sanctioned slavery, and to prove it he quoted Governor Hammond, and prominent Doctors of Divinity, both North and South. I frequently meet with men of this character, whose humanity has led them to look with contempt upon a religion, which, according to its professed ministers sanctions 'the sum of all villanies.' The truth is, the South is full of those who openly declare their contempt of the Bible, and the number will continue to increase, so long as it is made to countenance every popular sin."

But at the North, this class of skeptics has alarmingly increased during the last ten years. Multitudes may be found, the friends of liberty, peace, temperance, and every philanthropic reform, men of intelligence and apparent moral worth, and of unblemished private character, who have become thoroughly infidel in their principles! Have become, I say, for once they were believers in the Bible, many of them were trained by pious parents and nurtured in the Sabbath School, and some

were even members of the Church and ministers of the Gospel. They go boldly through the land, making addresses, holding conventions, issuing books, papers, and tracts, and endeavoring to shake the confidence of the public in Churches, ministers and the Bible.

I am well aware that pro-slavery ministers and editors have derived an argument from these very facts against the anti-slavery cause, as though it tended to infidelity. They have quoted the extravagant language of Garrison, H. C. Wright, Theodore Parker, and others, as a text from which to warn Christians not to labor for the speedy overthrow of slavery. Moreover, I am myself greatly grieved and humbled by the spirit and conduct of these infidel reformers, and am willing to confess that their principles are in some respects dangerous, their language and opinions often indefensible, and their present influence largely evil. Nevertheless, I have a word of truth to speak to the "Christian" apologizers for oppression, in the name of crushed humanity, and an insulted God.

Rail on, scoff on, if you will, while you point the finger of delusive warning at the infidelity

of Garrison and his associates; but know that you scoff at the work of your own hands, and that the larger you maintain your position, the longer will be the number of those who will denounce the Bible, the ministry and the Church. Nay! start not at this announcement, as though it were something strange. It is not more certain that the sun shines at noon-day, than that your conduct has for years past been multiplying infidels. Such sermons as were preached and printed a few years since in defence of the Fugitive Slave law, and such "religious" newspapers as some which pretend to represent the Christian community, do more to diffuse infidelity than all the writings of avowed deists! Corrupt Christianity in the form of the Romish, Greek and Armenian Churches, aided in the diffusion of Mohammedanism, and has for centuries secured the continued rejection of the Gospel by the followers of the Prophet; and so, corrupt Christianity, displaying its nakedness through the entire South, and installed in the high places of the North, is creating a revulsion, such as carries multitudes over to infidelity. You denounce anti-slavery agita-

tors as the "troublers of Israel," and I will answer for them out of that blessed book which your inhumanity has brought into contempt: "And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' And he answered, *I* have not troubled Israel; but *thou* and *thy father's house*, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and hast followed Baalim."

"There was a time, when the class of infidels, of whom I now speak, believed in the volume of our hope, attended the worship of God in the sanctuary, and respected the ambassadors of the Savior. What has occasioned the sad and guilty change? Hear me, ye ministers and Church members, who have been false to humanity and to God! and you shall understand their fall. They were sensible of the wrongs inflicted on their brother man; they saw the lash which buried itself in his quivering flesh; they beheld the tears which streamed down his dusky cheek; they heard the heart-piercing groans which rent the air; they witnessed the degradation to which he was reduced, while he was sold on the auction stand,

and was driven with the cattle to work in the field, an outraged man stripped of all his rights, a miserable dehumanized chattel! Horror-stricken at the atrocity of such crimes, and burning with anxiety to overthrow a system which reduced millions to the condition of brutes while leaving them the feelings of men, thus making them susceptible of tortures such as brutes can never know, they came to you for help, expecting the followers of the compassionate Jesus to "remember those in bonds as bound with them." They were earnest and used plain words; they were for direct and energetic measures, such as the exigency seemed to demand; and it were strange if the weakness of human nature did not occasionally infuse too much of earthly passion into their language and action. But as was long since observed, "Something must be pardoned to the spirit of liberty." Men do not always measure their words when exposing high-handed outrage. What was the reception with which they met? You denounced them as fanatics; you refused the use of your churches for meetings of prayer and conference in behalf of the oppressed; you apologized for the slaveholder

more frequently and more heartily than you expressed sympathy for the slave; you branded their measures as imprudent and unwise, without substituting others or suggesting any course but one of entire passivity; you defended slavery from the Bible; you welcomed slaveholders to your pulpits and communion-tables, and were, in fact, so busy "tithing mint, anise, and cummin," regulating Church government, suppressing dancing, denouncing marriage with a wife's sister, framing creeds, enjoying metaphysical tournaments, and silencing heretics, that you "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, (justice,) mercy, and faith," declaring often in your ecclesiastical bodies that there was no time to spare for discussing the claims of the oppressed! Need I picture the result? Does not the ball always rebound when it strikes the opposing wall? Does not one extreme always beget the other? They turned away indignant, and starting from your assertion that the Bible sanctioned slavery, and finding that the voice of God in the conscience condemned it, concluded to follow the latter, and to discard what seemed to be a religion of oppression. I do not

exonerate them, but I do lay a mountain load of guilt upon you. The effect has been, that your indifference to humanity and perversion of Scripture, drove them in their hasty reasoning to "come-outism" and infidelity, and now, forsooth, you strengthen yourselves in yet more determined opposition to reform, by reference to their irregularities! This reacts upon them again, and thus the breach widens, the evil increases, the cause of liberty suffers, and the Bible is dishonored!

Reader! ponder the facts and arguments thus laid before you. The present crisis is one of intense interest to the true follower of Christ. There must be a new reformation in the American Church, a severance of all the ties which guiltily bind us to the system of oppression. Religion must be taken out of the creed and established in the life. Never was the epistle of James more needed, and it should be preached till we lay stress on holiness as fully as upon doctrine, and justify our faith by the exhibition of appropriate works. A new type of piety is demanded, more simple, Scriptural, whole-hearted and practical, the essence of which shall be LOVE. Let the

friends of reform aim at nothing less than raising the Churches to such a standard, and in order to it, let the decree go forth, inexorable as the law of God, that no oppressor shall have a place among the recognized followers of Christ, nor be counted worthy in the state of the suffrages of Christians. Let our church discipline, our missionary efforts, all our benevolent operations be conducted on the principle of no compromise with sin, no fellowship with known transgressors.

It is an evil hour when infidelity marshals its forces with humanity for its watchword, and the conscience of the world on its side, while Christianity in the hands of those who betray its interests, leads forth its host to do battle for oppression! If we were shut up to such a conflict, infidelity would triumph, the Bible would fall. Then would be true of the Church, what was anciently said of Jerusalem, "All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem," saying, "Is this the city that man call 'The Perfection of Beauty,' 'The Joy of the Whole Earth?'"

This may seem like strong language, but

it describes the issue which many of our religious teachers are forcing upon the Church. What shall we say of such a ministry? How shall we ease our burdened souls, save in the indignant language of the poet:

“How long, O Lord! how long
Shall such a priesthood barter truth away,
And in Thy name, for robbery and wrong
At thine own altars pray!

“Woe to the priesthood! woe
To those whose hire is with the price of blood—
Perverting, darkening, changing as they go,
The searching truths of God!

“Their glory and their might
Shall perish; and their very names shall be
Vile before all the people, in the light
Of a World's Liberty.”

THE END

OFFICE AND DEPOSITORY OF THE
American Reform Tract and Book Society,

NO. 28 WEST FOURTH STREET.

CINCINNATI, *February 1, 1856.*

THE AMERICAN REFORM TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY, it is believed, is the offspring of necessity, brought into existence to fill a vacuum left unoccupied by most other Publishing Boards and Institutions—its object being to publish such Tracts and Books as are necessary to awaken a decided, though healthful, agitation on the great questions of Freedom and Slavery. This is its primary object, though its constitution covers the broad ground of “promulgating the doctrines of the Reformation, to point out the application of the principles of Christianity to every known sin, and to show the sufficiency and adaptation of those principles to remove all the evils of the world and bring on a form of society in accordance with the Gospel of Christ.” To spread these principles of the Society broadcast over the land, it was at first thought a weekly newspaper was indispensable, and the “Christian Press” was sent abroad, as on the wings of the wind, and we doubt not has done its mission for good. But, as funds were not furnished in sufficient amount to carry on a weekly issue, and add to the number of Tracts and Books demanded, a year since, the Press was reduced in size, and issued only monthly. This change in policy has enabled the Society to relieve itself of a debt which, a year since, threatened its existence, and to add to the number of Tracts and Books, and, at the late annual meeting, to show assets, in Stereotype Plates, Books, and Tracts, to the Amount of over \$2,500, including \$1,184, in cash on hand, and clear of liabilities. This favorable change in the affairs of the Society, it is hoped will restore confidence, and lead the *active friends of Freedom and Reform* to come forward in voluntary co-operation with the Directors, and add largely to our number of Tracts and Books, and to commission Colporteurs.

The offer of \$100, for the best manuscript for an Anti-Slavery S. S. Book brought to our hands forty-eight competitors, and, although the prize was awarded to but one, there are a number worthy of publication; and thus, many useful books will be added to our list, if the means for publishing are provided. Besides these “competitors,” we have other manuscripts for Tracts and Books, which we wish to publish without delay.

It is the aim of the present Directors to use all possible economy, and bring out a larger series of Tracts, and especially to increase the number of Sabbath School Books, so that Sabbath Schools may be furnished with a Christian Anti-Slavery Literature, in connection with other subjects, without unnecessary delay.

At the late annual election there was some change in the Officers (though not in the Principles) of the Society, it may be satisfactory to give them. They are as follows:

President:

Rev. JOHN RANKIN, Ripley, O.

Vice-Presidents:

A. A. GUTHRIE, Esq., Putnam, O.;

Rev. G. W. PERKINS, Chicago, Ill.;

Rev. E. GOODMAN, " "

Rev. J. BLANCHARD, Galesburgh, Ill.;

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Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer:

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In this Board of Directors, the active friends of Freedom and Reform, and all others have a guaranty that the funds contributed will be judiciously expended, and the Society, now in a prosperous condition, will go forward, adding to its Tracts, Books, and Stereotype Plates, and its influence for good spread throughout the land.

This will be accomplished just in accordance with the amount of funds received; and contributors should recollect that the free-will offering, inclosed and sent by mail, will accomplish more than the same sum called for by an Agent.

The "Society Record" will hereafter be published monthly, and sent *free* to all contributors and friends who will send us their address.

GEO. L. WEED,

Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer.

